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## Special Educational Needs Support Guide

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# Special Educational Needs Support Guide



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## Educational support for children with a learning disability

The strategies outlined below do not fall under specific learning difficulty categories



because the types of support you can offer as a teacher are often similar across the spectrum of learning difficulties. Strategies will be categorised under specific difficulties rather than the learning difficulty label. This will help teachers to choose the correct strategies based on the educational needs of the child rather than their perceived educational needs based on their learning difficulty 'label'.

It should be noted that the strategies listed below can be of benefit to *all* children whether or not they have a learning difficulty. These strategies can be included in your lesson plans for all children rather than one or two children in your class. By allowing all children to access all of the educational support and materials provided for the children with learning difficulties you will help to make your classroom environment inclusive.

### Teacher's role

A teacher's role is to educate all children despite any additional needs. A teacher should strive to provide an inclusive learning environment where all children can access the curriculum and learn together. This can be achieved by using some of the strategies listed below and being creative within your classrooms.



Sometimes children will require more specialist support than what you can provide as a teacher. Other types of support that can help children's education but cannot be provided by a teacher include:

- Speech and Language Therapy: for children who have difficulties in speech, language and/or swallowing.
- Occupational Therapy: for children with physical disabilities and fine and gross motor difficulties
- Otolaryngology: for children with hearing impairment and hearing loss
- Ophthalmology: for children with vision impairment and sight loss
- Social services: for children who are experiencing additional difficulties within their home or community and require support for daily living.

### **Multisensory learning environment**

Teachers should be aware that all children learn differently, and, therefore, multiple teaching approaches should be used with all children. It is often recommended that children with learning difficulties are taught through a multisensory approach. A multisensory approach is one that stimulates multiple senses at the one time: vision, auditory, taste, smell, balance and touch. Most teaching only focuses on two of these senses: vision and auditory, which means that learners who learn through their other senses are being excluded.



Teaching the curriculum through a multisensory teaching approach provides children with the opportunity to make connections to real life problems and enables them to learn concepts. Multisensory learning environments are hugely beneficial and have been shown to enhance children's brain functioning by stimulating the brain in multiple ways. For example, tactile learning improves fine motor skills and learning using balance promotes body memory; and a multisensory learning environment will benefit all pupils within a classroom setting, not just those pupils with a learning difficulty.

There are numerous ways to create a multisensory learning environment for your pupils. Multisensory learning environments require teachers to think creatively about education rather than rigidly. The specific educational supports listed throughout this document would benefit from a multisensory approach.



## Examples of multisensory learning

- Mathematics: using objects or counters; following a map; counting number of steps to get from one place to another; computer-based maths activities; cutting up food to represent fractions; sorting and matching activities; using board games; using specially designed maths materials such as Numicon, etc.
- Fine motor skills: drawing on the ground with chalk; tracking finger across a line; using tweezers to pick up counters while counting; using pincer grip to pick up and eat food.
- Literacy: role plays, songs, artwork, word matching games. When learning a new word the child could see it, say it, write it in the air with their finger, draw it in a sand tray, draw a picture of the word, build the word with cut out letters, etc.



## Specific support targets, strategies and activities

### *Visual disturbances, visual stress or visual tracking difficulties*



- Use tinted (cream) or pastel coloured paper rather than white paper
- Provide a coloured overlay
- Provide glasses with coloured lens
- Provide a reading ruler to assist with keeping their eyes focused on the right place / line of reading
- Use coloured text rather than black: one colour per row to help pupils locate information.

Instead of this: the girl visited her grandmother. Her grandmother lived in a forest. The girl was scared to walk through the forest on her own so asked her father to take her. Her father walked with her and left her at her grandmother's house.

Try this:

1. The girl visited her grandmother.
2. Her grandmother lived in a forest.
3. The girl was scared to walk through the forest on her own so asked her father to take her.
4. Her father walked with her and left her at her grandmother's house.

- Number each row of text to assist pupils in locating information
- Reduce the amount of work that needs to be copied out from textbooks or a white/black board
- Allow the child to have extra time to process visual information
- Provide information through a variety of mediums: written, pictures, physical materials and vocally.



- Help the child to train their vision by completing simple puzzles such as 'Spot the Difference' or 'Where's Wally?'
- Colour code mathematical operations: use a different colour for each operation:  $\times \div + -$ . Keep the use of colour consistent in your lessons, e.g. always use blue for  $\times$ , always use red for  $\div$ , always use green for  $+$  and always use orange for  $-$ . If you have any maths displays on the walls also use these colours
- Use squared paper to help children organise numbers on a page
- Use coloured markers or highlighters to highlight important parts of a question
- Use practical materials such as counters or Numicon to support written work
- Have a well-ordered classroom with clear areas marked out and labels on all equipment and materials: literacy equipment, maths equipment, music equipment, art materials, etc.



### *Auditory Processing Difficulties*

- Support your verbal instructions with visual materials (e.g. visual timetable / schedule / instructions)



jumper?'

- Frequently repeat any instructions you give to the class
- Slow down your speed of speaking and break instructions into smaller sections
- Allow some thinking time before you ask for an answer to a question. For example, 'Think about the character in the book and what he was wearing', then, allow one minute of thinking time; then ask: 'what colour was his

## Memory Difficulties

Be careful not to overload a child who has difficulties with their memory with too much information at once.

- Break down information or instructions into small sections to give to the child
- Slow down your speech when giving instructions
- Ask the children in the class to repeat back the instructions so the child can hear it multiple times. In this way you can also check if the child can remember the instructions
- Make use of memory and visual aids. For example, desk checklist detailing what children need to have before they start their work, visual timetable/schedule of the day with drawings or pictures of the child/children doing each activity, mnemonics, pictures showing child what to do, and so on
- Reduce distractions when child is working. For example, reduce class noise; allow the child to work away from other children by providing a desk screen or separate area in classroom
- Play memory games to help increase working memory capacity. For example, memory card games, whole class games where each child has to remember what the other children have said: I went to the market and bought ... ; he went to the market and bought ... ; she went to the market and bought ... , etc.
- Use large wall posters to remind pupils of basic concepts that are not easy to recall. For example, time, number line, times tables
- Make use of subject wall displays. For example, current maths topic with example of how to perform the calculation.





## *Phonological Awareness and Speech and Language*

- Practice listening skills. For example, call out short instructions / directions that the children should follow ('stand on one foot at a red door'; 'find a leaf'; 'draw a circle on top of a square')
- Speak clearly and slowly when giving instructions
- When teaching children about letter sounds keep them pure and do not add any 'schwa' (additional noise) to the sound
- Promote awareness of rhymes by introducing more rhymes to your teaching. For example, through class songs, matching rhyming pictures, reading out poems, etc
- Ask the child to identify the odd word out. For example, which word doesn't rhyme, which word doesn't start with a 'm' sound?
- Help children to articulate sounds correctly by showing them the shape of the word or playing a silly noise game. This game requires you to have a range of pictures that you will show the class. Each picture will have a sound that the children need to make when they see it. Show the children the pictures and wait for the sound. The pictures should relate to the sound, for example, a picture of an octopus should require the children to make an 'o' sound
- Get children to identify where in a word they hear a sound: beginning, middle or end
- Display the alphabet and useful words on the walls
- Draw words how they look (iconicity). For example, the word 'bed' in English can be written shaped like a bed
- Produce 'easy read' materials with fewer words and more pictures to support the words (see 'social story' on page 16 for an example). You could take pictures of your pupils acting out each of the sentences contained in the picture. This can help the children to better relate to the text
- Use pictures and/or real objects when teaching new words to simplify understanding for children with receptive language difficulties.



- Use exaggerated gestures in addition to auditory and visual cues when explaining action words
- Consistently check if everyone understood before moving to the next task/ word
- Reward all verbal contributions, to encourage all children to use language to express their needs/ answer questions
- Create structured opportunities for intentional communication to encourage children to speak. This is important for children with expressive language disorder/delay
- Offer choices when asking a question to a child who finds it difficult to express himself using language
- Take time with children who have difficulties with expressive language, as a child might feel pressured to speak and go blank. Therefore, be patient with these children, where you can also give cues to the child to help them
- For children with severe expressive language gaps and relatively good



comprehension, communication boards or books could be made for the child to help them express themselves through pointing and showing. However, having an alternative way to deliver a message should not cancel out the use of language. Pointing to an object, picture or action can be used to stimulate a child to speak. When using communication boards or books the teacher should encourage those children to speak the words in addition to pointing.





## *Self-esteem and confidence building*



- Praise and recognise effort where possible: use rewards that the child enjoys, such as, stickers or certificates
- Set realistic targets for the child and expect that the child will achieve them
- Differentiate work: make sure the work you set is at the correct level for all abilities in the classroom. You can do this by providing different activities at different levels for the same topic or setting the same task but getting children to show their learning in different ways
- Discuss the child's difficulties with them, and reassure them that you are there to help and support them.
- Encourage positive behaviour: praise success and effort, encourage child when difficulties arise and keep an interest in the child's life beyond school. This will show the child that you care for them and help them to feel safe and secure in school
- Acknowledge the child's successes and strengths, no matter how small or insignificant you feel they are. Consider having a display in your classroom for all pupils to share something about what they are good at
- If you know that a child is going to fail at an activity, then question whether the activity is an appropriate learning opportunity and do not purposely let a child fail.

## *Organisational skills*

- Ensure you have a well laid out classroom with specific areas for each type of material/equipment. All equipment / storage should be labelled with what it is used for, for example, literacy equipment, maths equipment, etc.
- Use visual checklists for daily routines and classwork



- Allow the child to sit in an area free of distractions to complete their work. You could consider using a desk screen or have a separate area.



- Provide the child with exactly what they need for each task then gradually remove support by allowing the child to get one item they need, then two items, etc. This should be done at the pace of the child

- Set up a timer in the classroom to show children how long they have to complete a task or use a count-down visual. A count down visual can be used by sticking it on to the child's desk. This visual will be designed by the teacher using the child's interests, such as, for example, football. The teacher will print and laminate a number of football pictures. The teacher will tell the child that they have five minutes to complete the task, each laminated picture of a football represents one minute. Take a ball away for each minute that has passed. The child can easily see that time is passing and that they need to work quickly

- Use a placement mat on the child's desk. This is often done for serving food. The place mat will have a picture of a plate, cutlery and a cup in the positions the real items should be placed. This can be adapted for the classroom and the teacher can design an equivalent placemat for worksheet/book placement and pen/pencil placement. Alternatively, the teacher can map out the areas on the table using coloured tape
- Colour code any workbooks or folders. For example, red for literacy, blue for maths, green for art, etc. This will help a child to easily identify and retrieve the book they need
- Use a reward system to positively reinforce organisation skills e.g. use a sticker reward chart, give the child a weekly/daily certificate focusing on successes, small prizes, etc.





## *Attention and listening*

- Teach the child the skills of a good listener: sitting still (this may be difficult for some children), focusing on the words the speaker is saying, and good eye contact. For some children eye contact will help, but for others, such as autistic children, it will be a distraction to good listening. Don't force the child to make eye contact – it can also be distressing, as well as a distraction
- Provide a wobble cushion or fidget toy for children who need to move while they focus
- Position the child near the teacher and make frequent eye contact with the child when you are talking, but only if appropriate. Some children, for example, autistic children, cannot make eye contact and listen at the same time. Don't force eye contact
- Before speaking to the class or giving instructions make sure you gain the attention of the children. This can be achieved by using a signal to show the children that you are about to speak. This should be agreed with the children prior to starting it. You could ring a small bell, clap your hands, knock a table or put your hands in the air. However, be aware of any sensory issues in the classroom especially if there are children who do not like loud noises. If this is the case, choose to do something silent
- Use the child's name to get their attention if you are speaking to them directly. Wait for the child to show they are listening before you begin to speak
- Ask the child to sit away from distracting noises
- Use visual support materials to support your words, such as, for example, flash cards, objects or pictures



- Keep instructions short or break them down into chunks.



- Tell the children what 'key words' they should be listening out for. Ask the child to signal discreetly (e.g. thumbs up, show a card, wink, etc) to you when they hear a key word mentioned (you can emphasise this word in your speech). Listen and respond stories are a good activity to practise this with. Listen and respond stories are any story that has a repetitive theme with

similar words throughout (e.g., characters who appear throughout the story). Before reading the story aloud to the class the teacher should explain that they are going to listen carefully for some words. When they hear these words they will make a sound or do an action to show they have heard it. For example, if the word 'bird' occurred frequently the children could chirp; if the word 'dog' occurred frequently the children could bark; and if the word 'tree' occurred frequently the children could stand up tall and spread and wave their arms like branches, etc.

### *Fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination*



There are lots of interactive ways to practise and improve a child's fine motor skills without making them write continually. Forcing a child to continually write to develop their fine motor skills can put a child off writing completely, resulting in difficult behaviours or refusal to write. Build their confidence through fun activities where they are able to practice the skills needed

before they can successfully write. The list below gives some examples of how to do this, and how to incorporate the development of these skills into your curriculum and lesson planning.

- Picking up small items, e.g. peas, beads, pebbles
- Picking up small items with tweezers
- Threading beads

- Colouring in pages
- Sewing or stitching
- Following a trail drawn on a page with a finger or pencil
- Collect marbles with a spoon
- Finger drawing in sand
- Painting
- Drawing in the air
- Sorting out small toys or counters into groups
- Counting money
- Jigsaws
- Using scissors
- Completing small craft items
- Opening and closing latches
- Using a computer (keyboard and mouse)
- Putting a paperclip onto a page
- Play dough and baking or cooking activities
- Using stickers: peel off back and stick down (you could get child to stick own sticker onto reward chart)
- Eye droppers with water.



### *Gross motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination*

Gross motor skills refer to the bigger movements the child makes with all of their body: kicking, walking, twisting, nodding, jumping, moving, etc.

- Provide time in the school day for physical activities such as dancing, sports or using outdoor equipment (climbing frames and trampolines)

- Draw a hopscotch template on the ground outside and allow the children to jump and hop (this can support a maths activity)
- Blow bubbles and ask the children to chase and pop them
- Use equipment such as ride on cars and bicycles
- Songs with actions
- Create an obstacle course for the child to do
- Ask the child to walk like an animal of your choice
- Throw and catch
- Balance on a wobble cushion or walk along a balance bar



- Play 'Follow the Leader'. The children have to follow a leader and copy all of their actions
- Hopping and skipping
- Stepping stones: place items on the ground and call them stepping stones (e.g. paper plates). Ask the child to go to another area in the room making sure to step only on the stepping stones.

### *Communication, socialisation and social issues*

- Social stories: this is a story that is designed by a teacher or other supportive person that prepares a child for social activity. The story will use words and pictures to help describe exactly what will happen, where and when. This can be used for socialisation activities, or for teaching children about routines, personal hygiene, personal care, etc. Social stories are versatile and can be designed and adapted for each individual child and their circumstances. There are many forms and designs of social story: some people like to make them into a book while others prefer a comic strip layout. You can include cartoon pictures or real-life pictures in the social story. The social story should address the areas or issues that the child struggles with, for example,

if they have sensory issues with sounds then use a story. Here is an example of a social story about going to the dentist:

### Ahmed goes to the Dentist



Ahmed puts on his coat and walks to the front door.



Ahmed gets into a yellow taxi.



The yellow taxi will drive Ahmed to the Dentist.



Ahmed will get out of the taxi and walk through the sliding doors into the Dentist's waiting room.



The waiting room will have green chairs and there will be other people there. The waiting room will have lots of people talking.



Ahmed will sit on a green chair and wait until his name is called by the Dentist.



When Ahmed hears his name, he will walk into the Dentist's room.



In the Dentist's room he will see lots of metal tools that the Dentist will use to look in Ahmed's mouth. Ahmed might hear some buzzing noises.



Ahmed will sit on the big chair in the Dentist's room.



Ahmed will open his mouth for the Dentist and allow the Dentist to see his teeth.



The Dentist will give Ahmed a sticker when he has finished looking at his teeth.



Ahmed will leave the Dentist's room and go out through the sliding doors and into the yellow taxi.



The yellow taxi will take Ahmed home.

- Role play: the teacher and the child or children can act out appropriate ways to behave in certain situations. A role play that focuses on issues of socialisation can help develop the skills children need to make friends
- Teach respectful vocabulary that encourages positive interactions
- Provide unstructured opportunities to interact with peers
- Build in team work / group work into your lessons
- Be a role model and demonstrate what a good friend does by acting nicely to the children
- Play games where children need to talk and engage with others. For example, one child has to describe how to draw a simple picture to children



who are turned away from the child. Or a child puts their hand into a box with an object inside. They need to describe what they feel to the rest of the class. Then the rest of the class can guess what the object is

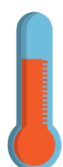


- Provide opportunities to share stories about the child's life. Circle time is a good way to achieve this. All the children sit in a circle and take turns to share something about their life/day
- Teach how to take turns. You can use a list of names to show the order of turns to be taken. The child could tick these off to make sure everyone has a turn
- Provide alternative communication methods to verbal communication. Learn and teach sign language or Makaton, use visuals or learn to recognise what the child's body language is telling you.



## Emotional needs

- Use emoji faces on toys or pictures. Connect the faces to the feeling words (verbally or in written form). Ask children to give examples of when they felt similar to the emoji face
- Develop an awareness of the child's identity and focus on their strengths. This can be built into circle time activities where each child gets to share information about their lives. If you need to focus on one child you could ask the child to draw a picture of themselves every time they are doing something nice or good. When they complete the picture provide a box for the child to store the pictures. After a number of pictures have been placed in the box set aside some time to look at the pictures with the child and discuss all of the good things they have done. Ask how the pictures make the child feel
- Develop self-awareness: draw a thermometer on a page with a calm face at the bottom and a crazy face at the top. Ask the child at different points of the day how they are feeling, calm, hyper or somewhere in between. This activity will help children to identify how energetic they are feeling in certain situations
- Provide children with an opportunity to express to you how they are feeling at the start of the school day. You could do this by putting an emotions chart on the wall on which the child places their face or name beside how they are feeling. You could also allow children to change this throughout the day. Alternatively, provide a smaller number of four or five emoji faces and the child can choose one to set on their desk
- Read stories about emotions and feelings or ask the children to tell you how they think each character is feeling in a story.



## *Encouraging appropriate behaviour*

- Have clear policies and guidelines about dealing with behaviour. Try to focus on the good behaviour rather than the bad. Use a reward chart that focuses on good behaviour. When you see the child behaving appropriately offer praise and put a sticker on the reward chart
- Have a plan and consequences for bad behaviour and display them in the room. For example, 'if you behave inappropriately the teacher will remind you that your behaviour is not good. If you continue the teacher will remind you again that your behaviour is not good. If you continue the behaviour a third time then you will not be allowed to do something you enjoy'. This could be displayed on a traffic light picture on the wall (with each light representing the stage of behaviour: green first warning, orange second warning and red means a sanction) as it will help visual learners to see the impact of their behaviour
- Provide a space for children to go to if they feel they need to calm down. This space can allow children to meditate, do yoga or focus on diversionary activities, such as colouring in or hugging teddies
- Social stories: this is a story that prepares a child for a social activity and is written by a teacher or supportive person (see above). It will use words and pictures to help describe exactly what will happen, where and when. This can be used for socialisation activities or for teaching children about routines, personal hygiene, personal care, etc. Social stories are versatile and can be designed and adapted for each individual child and their circumstances. There are many forms and designs of social story: some people like to make them into a book while others prefer a comic strip layout. You can include cartoon pictures or real-life pictures in the social story. The social story should address the areas or issues that the child struggles with, for example, how to respond to someone if they are winning a game.



- Visual cues: show the child pictures of good behaviour and bad behaviour or use 'stop' signs to ask the child to stop a behaviour



- Design a class contract: this contract will be written together as a class and will focus on the behaviour that both the children and teacher expect from each other. This could be written during circle time by asking the children what 'rules' or 'behaviour' the class and teacher should follow. When everyone agrees on the 'rules' or 'behaviours' then they should sign the contract. It is good to do this on a

large flip chart page so that there is room for everyone's signature. The agreed 'rules' and 'behaviours' should be displayed on the wall



- Ensure your lessons have a clear structure and can be accessed by all in the classroom. Sometimes children can feel under-challenged or too challenged and react by acting out or behaving badly
- Model good behaviour and reduce shouting within the classroom. If the teacher uses shouting to gain attention, then the children will think this will work for them too
- Use role play to allow the children to show situations where a child can choose to behave in a good or bad way.



## Summary Tables of Sensory needs

### 1. Sight



Please note that the advice in the following summary tables are especially helpful to autistic children.

How to identify if a child is under-stimulated or under-sensitive to sight	How to support a child who is under-sensitive or under-stimulated to sight
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Objects may appear dark</li><li>• Child may experience blurred vision</li><li>• Poor depth perception</li><li>• Clumsiness</li><li>• Difficulties throwing and catching</li><li>• One object may be magnified but things on the periphery appear blurred</li><li>• Child may enjoy looking at and playing with light</li></ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coloured glasses</li><li>• Coloured overlays</li><li>• Visual supports</li><li>• Sensory light toys (flashing balls, fibre optics, etc)</li></ul>
How to identify if a child is over-stimulated or over-sensitive to sight	How to support a child who is over-stimulated or over sensitive to sight
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distorted vision</li><li>• Objects and lights can appear to move or jump around</li><li>• Difficulties sleeping as person is sensitive to light</li><li>• Person finds it easier to focus on one detail rather than whole object.</li></ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess the environment to see what changes could be made</li><li>• Use blackout curtains or a tent to cancel out light</li><li>• Reduce the use of florescent lights in the classroom (bring in lamps or let in natural light)</li><li>• Reduce visual noise (fewer colours on the walls)</li><li>• Provide a workspace / rest place away from distractions.</li></ul>

## 2. Sound

How to identify if a child is under-stimulated or under-sensitive to sound	How to support a child who is under-sensitive or under-stimulated to sound
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child may only hear sound through one ear or only have partial hearing</li><li>• Child may not acknowledge some sounds</li><li>• Child might enjoy loud noises such as banging doors</li><li>• Child enjoys banging objects</li><li>• Child enjoys crowded places or noisy places.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visual supports to back up verbal instructions</li><li>• Inform others about under-sensitivity to avoid misunderstandings</li><li>• Ensure that the experiences they enjoy are included in their daily schedule to ensure sensory need is met, e.g. time for banging objects together.</li></ul>
How to identify if a child is over-stimulated or over-sensitive to sound	How to support a child who is over-stimulated or over sensitive to sound
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sounds can sound louder than they are</li><li>• Sounds may become muddled or distorted</li><li>• Child may be able to hear conversations happening at a distance</li><li>• Child is not able to ignore or cut out background sounds which make is hard to concentrate.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess the environment to see what changes could be made</li><li>• Reduce external sounds by closing doors, windows, curtains</li><li>• Provide ear plugs or ear defenders</li><li>• Prepare child for loud environment</li><li>• Provide spaces to complete work that are screened and away from noises.</li></ul>

### 3. Smell



How to identify if a child is under-stimulated or under-sensitive to smell	How to support a child who is under-sensitive or under-stimulated to smell
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child does not recognise different smells</li><li>• Child may fail to notice extreme odours</li><li>• Child may fail to notice own body odour</li><li>• Child may rely on other senses like taste to understand what they cannot smell.</li></ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visual supports to back up verbal instructions about hygiene</li><li>• Create a routine for hygiene (washing hands before eating and after using the toilet, etc)</li><li>• Use strong smelling products to cover strong smelling stimuli e.g. faeces or body odour</li><li>• Encourage person to use more appropriate stronger smells (e.g. perfumes).</li></ul>
How to identify if a child is over-stimulated or over-sensitive to smell	How to support a child who is over-stimulated or over sensitive to smell
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Smells can feel overpowering or intense to the child</li><li>• Intense sensitivity to smell can cause toileting issues</li><li>• Dislikes people who wear or use certain perfumes and soaps.</li></ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask people in contact with autistic person to wear and use unscented products.</li><li>• Try to keep environment free from smells</li><li>• Provide ventilation in toilets</li><li>• Use visual supports to help with toileting issues</li><li>• Open the windows or doors to let smells out.</li></ul>



## 4. Taste

How to identify if child is under-stimulated or under-sensitive to taste	How to support a child who is under-sensitive or under-stimulated to taste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prefers stronger tastes such as very spicy food</li><li>• Child may try to eat or mouth non-edible items such as stones dirt, flowers, faeces, grass, etc.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visual supports to back up verbal instructions about things that the child is allowed and not allowed to put in their mouths</li><li>• Provide child with strong tasting food using herbs and spices rather than salt.</li></ul>
How to identify if a child is over-stimulated or over-sensitive to taste	How to support a child who is over-stimulated or over sensitive to taste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some flavours and foods are too strong</li><li>• Very sensitive taste buds</li><li>• May have a restricted diet; some textures of food may cause discomfort</li><li>• Only eats certain foods e.g. pureed or smooth (mash potato or ice-cream)</li><li>• Limits food intake.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Try to provide a balanced diet while being aware of sensory preferences</li><li>• Visual aids such as a social story might help person to understand the function and purpose of food</li><li>• Provide weekly menus or develop weekly menus with autistic person</li><li>• Have a food group chart rule where the child has to choose one food from each food group to eat.</li></ul>

## 5. Touch

How to identify if child is under-stimulated or under-sensitive to touch	How to support a child who is under-sensitive or under-stimulated to touch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holds others tightly</li> <li>• High pain threshold</li> <li>• Unable to feel food in mouth</li> <li>• Self-harms</li> <li>• Enjoys heavy objects on top of them</li> <li>• Smears and plays with faeces</li> <li>• Chews on everything.</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For smearing offer similar textured alternatives e.g. jelly or corn flour and water</li> <li>• Purchase some chew toys designed for humans or offer straws or chew sweets</li> <li>• Weighted shoulder wrap or blanket</li> <li>• Find a safer way to experience pain e.g. elastic band on wrist</li> <li>• Fidget toys / stress balls</li> <li>• Chair with straps that hold child tightly (this should be led by the child and not the adult and should be easy for the child to use. This is not to restrain a child as restraining is not appropriate).</li> </ul>
How to identify if a child is over-stimulated or over-sensitive to touch	How to support a child who is over-stimulated or over sensitive to touch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Touch can be painful/uncomfortable</li> <li>• Dislikes anything on hands and feet</li> <li>• Difficulties washing and brushing hair</li> <li>• Sensitive head</li> <li>• Food and clothing textures can feel uncomfortable.</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give a warning before touching child</li> <li>• Change texture of food to suit e.g. puree/mash</li> <li>• Slowly introduce textures around mouth (not in)</li> <li>• Introduce different textures to touch e.g. have a sensory box with multiple textures</li> <li>• Turn clothes inside out and cut off labels</li> <li>• Allow child to complete uncomfortable tasks independently e.g. hair brushing/washing</li> </ul>

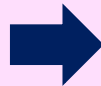
## 6. Balance (vestibular)

How to identify if a child is under-stimulated or under-sensitive to balance	How to support a child who is under-sensitive or under-stimulated to balance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A need to move, jump, rock, spin or swing, etc, to get sensory input.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage activities that develop vestibular system, e.g., use rocking horses, seesaws, swings, roundabouts, slides, catching a ball, batting a ball and practice walking smoothly over varied surfaces.</li></ul>
How to identify if a child is over-stimulated or over-sensitive to balance	How to support a child who is over-stimulated or over sensitive to balance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulties with activities like sport that requires a person to control their movements</li><li>• Child can find it hard to stop quickly during an activity</li><li>• Experiences motion sickness</li><li>• Struggles with activities where head is not up-right, or feet are off the ground.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Break activities down into small steps</li><li>• Use visual cues such as stop/go signs or a finish line</li><li>• Shorten the time spent on physical activities</li><li>• Don't ask person to stop suddenly</li><li>• Practice controlled movements at a slower pace e.g. dance movements or action songs.</li></ul>

## 7. Body Awareness (Proprioception)

### How to identify if a child is under-stimulated or under-sensitive to body awareness

- Stands too close to others (cannot judge personal space)
- Finds it hard to navigate through rooms
- May bump into furniture or other obstructions
- May bump into people.

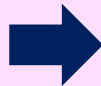


### How to support a child who is under-sensitive or under-stimulated to body awareness

- Position furniture around edge of room
- Use weighted shoulder wrap or blankets to provide deep pressure
- Use coloured tape or markers on the floor to indicate boundaries
- Use 'arm's length' rule for personal space.

### How to identify if a child is over-stimulated or over-sensitive to body awareness

- Difficulties with fine motor skills, e.g., can't do buttons or tie shoe laces
- May move whole body rather than head to look at something.



### How to support a child who is over-stimulated or over sensitive to body awareness

- Provide person with opportunities to develop their fine motor skills such as lacing board, play dough, tweezer activities, etc.
- Encourage pincher grip use to pick up small items like peas.

## *Routines*

- **Social stories:** this is a story that prepares a child for an activity. It will use words and pictures to help describe exactly what will happen, where and when. This can be used for teaching children about routines, personal hygiene, personal care, etc. Social stories are versatile and can be designed and adapted for each individual child and their circumstances. There are many forms and designs of social story: some people like to make them into a book while others prefer a comic strip layout. You can include cartoon pictures or real-life pictures in the social story. The social story should address the areas or issues that the child struggles with, for example, if they have sensory issues with sounds then sounds should be written about. See 'Socialisation and social issues' for an example story.
- **Visual timetables:** visual timetables are pictures and words that displayed in an order and show different stages or sections of the day. For example, they can be used to show a child the structure of the school day: literacy, maths, break, physical activity, play, lunch, art, home. They can also be used to show the steps and stages of an activity, for example, how to wash their hands: turn on tap, rinse hands, put on soap, rub, rinse then dry with a towel. The pictures in the visual timetable should be directly related to the words, e.g. Literacy hour could show a child reading a book, Art could show a child painting. You can use cartoons or real images in the visual timetables. Visual timetables can be broken down into shorter steps if the child responds better to this . For example, 'first we will do literacy then we will do maths'.
- **Practice the vocabulary of routines:** first, next, now, then, etc.
- **Routine songs:** you can make up some songs about routines for the children to sing about what they are doing. This can help them to remember each step involved.

